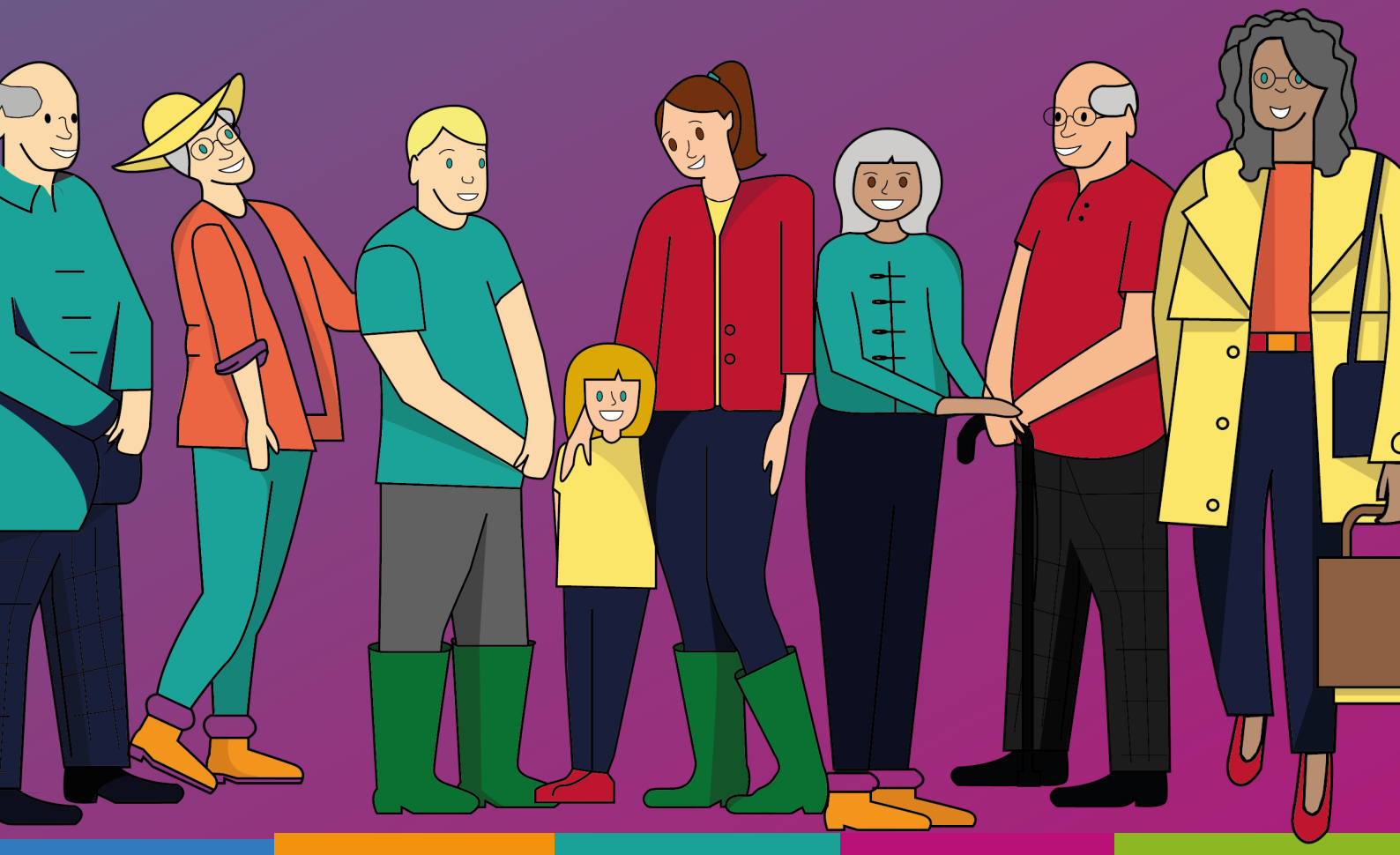
October 2021

South Somerset District Council

A GUIDE TO **free support services in South Somerset**

for those affected by the impacts of Covid-19



Purpose

This guide has been prepared with a particular focus on those residents who may never have had to make use of welfare support services before, but who due to Covid19 find themselves in situations they have never experienced before. This could be anything from:

End of Furlough arrangements

Loss of job

Loss of income

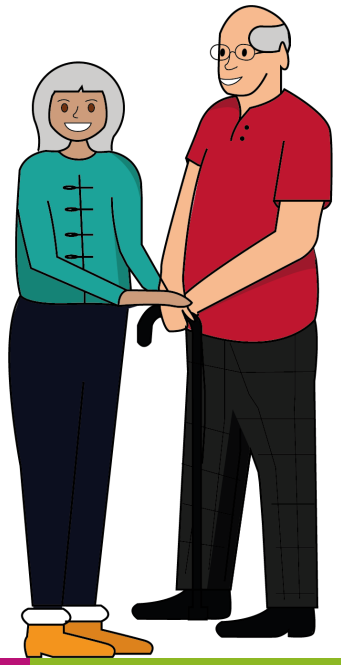
Loss of housing

Food poverty

Fuel poverty

Mental health difficulties

On the next few pages you will find information about a range of organisations that can be contacted for support.



South Somerset District Council

The Customer Connect Team are the first point of contact into the District Council. The staff are highly trained to support residents across a wide breadth of needs. We aim to help you with as much advice as possible either online or within your first call, however, if the query is more in depth we have more specialist teams that we can refer you to. We also work in partnership with CASS, Somerset County Council, Highways and Somerset Waste Partnership amongst other more specialist support groups.

Issues that you may be struggling with and which Customer Connect Staff can provide a first point of contact for, include:

- **Difficulty paying Council Tax or Business Rates**
- **Housing Advice**
- **Emergency food**
- **Grants**
- **Discounts/reliefs/benefits available for Council Tax or Business Rates**
- **Emergency housing**
- **Assistance with waste disposal**

The team can be contacted on **01935 462462** or via our 'contact us' online at **www.southsomerset.gov.uk**

Our Connect Centre in Petters House, Yeovil is open to the public at the following times:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday - 10 am to 2.30pm.
Wednesday - 9am to 4pm (every first Wednesday of the month we are open from 12 noon to 4pm).

Customer Access Points

There are also a number of un-manned Customer Access Point (CAP) computers available for public use in the following locations:

- **Crewkerne Town Hall,**
- **Chard Library, and**
- **Wincanton Balsam Centre.**

A further CAP will be opening soon in Langport Library. Customers can use the CAP to make applications or gain guidance. A telephone is located next to each CAP should you need help in using it.

Save time and go online

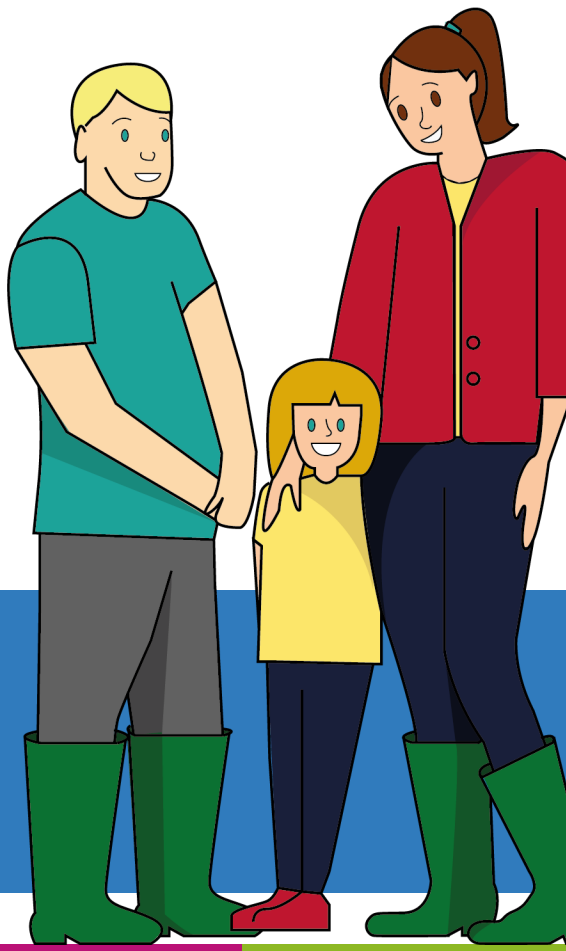
You can access our services online 24/7, whenever and wherever you need.
Simply create or sign into your account at **www.southsomerset.gov.uk/sign-in**

Citizens Advice South Somerset

Citizens Advice South Somerset offers free and confidential advice on a great many issues helping our clients to manage through changing circumstances or distressing situations.Many of us can face problems that seem complicated or overwhelming. At Citizens Advice South Somerset we believe that no one should have to face these problems without access to good quality advice. They specialize in advising people on their rights and responsibilities including issues such as welfare and benefits, debt and money, housing needs, employment problems, and family matters. They have a large team of highly trained advisers providing our clients with tailored advice on their unique situation.

On average they respond to callers within 20 minutes, often less. They also offer advice by email and this can be accessed using a simple form on our website.

Once a client has made contact they aim to provide all the advice they need during that first session.However if a client's advice needs are complex and further help from CASS is required they may offer on-going support including a face to face appointment. If the phone or email route into advice is not appropriate they can provide a face to face appointment.Any support worker or carer can make contact with CASS and use the Referral Agencies Form on their website to request an appointment.



Contact information:

Free phone Adviceline is open every day, 10am to 4pm on 0808 278 7842.

www.citizensadvicesouthsomerset.org.uk

Emergency food

There is a network of emergency Food Banks across South Somerset where food parcels can be obtained.
Below you will find the details of the Food Banks known to us and whether you can self-refer or need to be referred by another organisation.
South Somerset District Council Customer Connect service is able to refer to most of the Food Banks so please feel free to contact them in the first instance by phoning 01935 462462.

Brue Larder Engine House

bruelarder@brutontown.com
for details of opening hours.

Cary Cares

01963 602013 (24hr messaging service)

carycares1@gmail.com

Chard Lord's Larder

07542498366 Referral needs to be made by professional such as South Somerset District Council

Forefront Centre, 42 Fore St, Chard, TA20 1QA

Curry Rivel, Hambridge, Drayton

Granny Smith

07714265384

thesheiling@yahoo.co.uk

Steve Allinson

07808164068

steve@allinsonlaw.com

Ilminster

07713 727605 or 01460 54145
Open Weds - 10.00 to 12.00
Saturdays - 10.00 to 12.00
Help with deliveries can be arranged.

Minster Rooms, Court Barton, Ilminster

Langport Cares

01458 251881

jessicapitman@aol.com

Martock Parish Council

01935 310040

Transforming Lives Foodbank Martock

Referrals handled by Martock Town Council.
Foodbank run by MCF (Martock Christian Fellowship).

Somerton

Gillian Hampson - 07561 651372

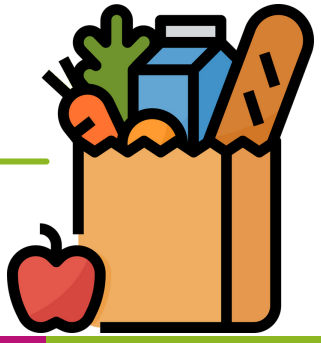
Wincanton

Food Bank run by Wincanton Community Church.

Wincanton Community Church, South Street, Wincanton.

Yeovil Lord's Larder

01935 479398 (24hr answer machine)
Open Mon to Fri,
10am – 2pm
for collections
and donations.



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Homelessness

If you think you are at risk of losing your home, you should seek advice immediately.

South Somerset District Council

SSDC can provide information and advice and discuss options.

01935 462 462

www.southsomerset.gov.uk /services/housing/homelessness

2.Citizens Advice South Somerset

Contact their free phone Adviceline is open every day from 10am to 4pm.

0808 278 7842

Shelter

In addition to SSDC you can access advice from the national Housing charity Shelter. They operate a telephone Helpline which is open every single day of the year.

0808 800 4444
8am - 8pm on weekdays
9am - 5pm on weekends

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness

Domestic Violence

If you are concerned about your safety you should dial 999 and speak to the police.

If the risk of homelessness is due to Domestic Violence you can access specialist help from the following organisations.

National Women's Aid

0808 2000 247
Helpline available 24 hours a day

https://www.womensaid.org.uk

Mankind

Mankind Initiative provides a help-line service for male victims of domestic violence or abuse.

01823 334244
Helpline available weekdays
10am - 4pm

https://www.mankind.org.uk

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Financial issues

Debt

For help with debt you can contact the following organisations.

Citizens Advice South Somerset

0808 2787842 Free phone adviceline is open everyday 10am - 4pm

www.citizensadvicesouthsomerset.org.uk

Christians Against Poverty

The Yeovil CAP Debt Centre is run in partnership with St John the Baptist church.

0800 3280006 Available Monday to Thursday 9.30am - 5pm and 9.30am - 3.30pm on Friday

https://www.sjyeovil.org.uk/get-involved/cap-centre

Help with Council Tax

South Somerset District Council

If you are finding difficult to pay your council tax then please do contact SSDC as soon as possible as there may be help that is available to you.

01935 462462

Contact us: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/forms/contact-us/

There is lots of helpful information on the council website if you are having difficulties paying your council tax.

Council Tax services: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/services/council-tax/i-m-finding-it-difficult-to-pay-my-council-tax/

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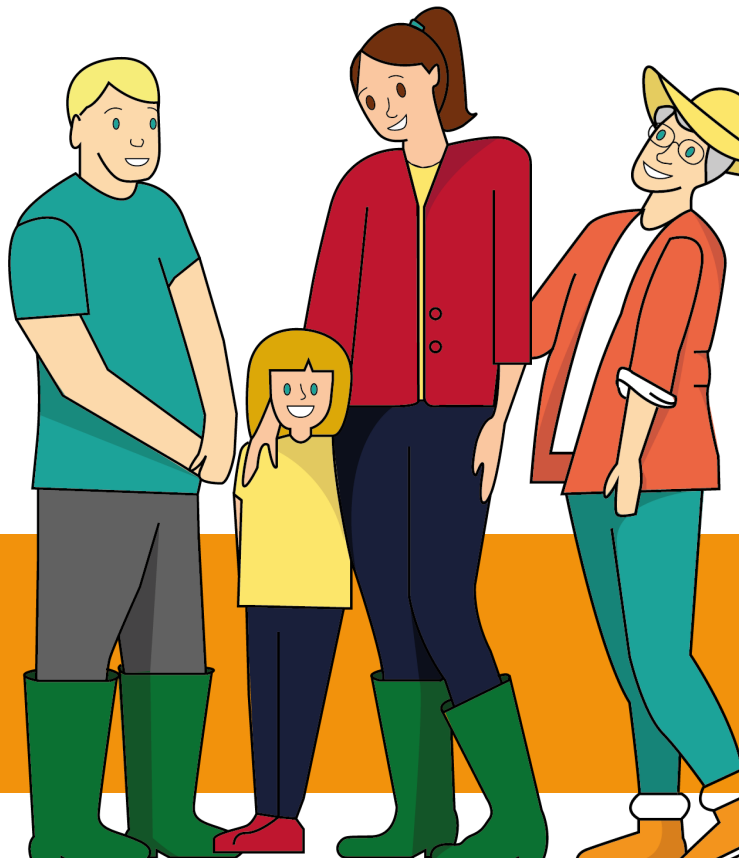
Mental Health - Mindline

Somerset Mindline is an emotional support and mental health helpline run by Somerset MIND.
It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
It is a confidential listening service which provides a safe place to talk if you, or someone you know, is in distress. They can also give basic information about mental health and local support services.
Mindline listeners treat all callers, regardless of background, in a non-judgmental way with dignity and respect. When the lines are busy, or closed, their switchboard can connect you to our sister service, the Samaritans.
As well as listening to your issues Mindline can also give information about;

- **Local services**
- **How to get help**
- **Basic information on mental health issues**

In terms of confidentiality when you call Mindline, your number will not display on their phones. You will not be asked for personal details to be shared unless you, or someone you know, would like Mindline to find immediate help from other services, and that you agree to give it. They will not pass on any information unless you have said it is ok to do so.
Somerset MIND offer a whole range of other mental health services, details of which can be found on their website.



Contact information:

01823 276 892

www.mindinsomerset.org.uk

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Employment Support

South Somerset District Council

For an extensive range of information and details of organisations and services that can help you get back into work, or training, if you have lost your job please visit :

www.southsomerset.gov.uk/life-events/help-and-support/i-am-looking-for-work-or-education-opportunities

Opportunities South Somerset

'Opportunities South Somerset' offers a tailored service for anyone searching for employment and training opportunities or wanting to improve their skills. The Hubs are here to help you build and create a bright new future in South Somerset.

Hubs are located at:
·Yeovil Library, King George Street , Yeovil
·Chard Library, Holyrood Lace Mill, Holyrood Street, Chard
·Balsam Centre, Balsam Park, Wincanton

www.opportunitieshub southsomerset.com

Jobcentre Plus Rapid Response Service

Helping people facing redundancy to write CVs and find jobs.
Providing general information about benefits. Helping people to find the right training and learn new skills. Helping with costs like travel to work expenses. Support can be accessed during the notice period and up to 13 weeks after redundancy.

0845 604 3719

rrs.enquiries@dwp.gov.uk

National Careers Service

NCC provide a complete careers support service, including helping identify transferable skills, explore career and training options and offer support and guidance to compose a CV.

Careers helpline: 0800 100 900
Text messages: 07766 413 219
Textphone: 0800 096 8336
Monday to Sunday, 8am to 10pm

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Employment Support

Skills Support for Redundancy

SSR is a funded programme to support employers and individuals affected by redundancy. SSR is a tailored service to meet your needs, offering a wide range of training and career support to help employees find alternative suitable employment.

www.serco-ese.com/skills-support-for-the-workforce/SSR

Step Up Somerset

Step up Somerset provides a directory of support organisations who offer free support and advice for your employees to get ready to look and apply for new employment opportunities.

https://www.stepupsomerset.org.uk/support

Job Centre

The Job Centre will support residents into work if they have claimed either Universal Credit (UC) or New Style Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). They will provide you with a dedicated Work Coach to aid you towards re-employment. South Somerset residents will likely access support from either the Yeovil or Taunton Job Centre.

Yeovil

Federated House,
29 – 31 Hendford,
Yeovil, BA20 1UU

Telephone: 0845 604 3719
Textphone: 0845 608 8551

Taunton

Brendon House, High Street,
Taunton, TA13NY

0845 604 3719

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Digital tools to help access the internet

A lot of the support or information in this guide has to be accessed online so if you need free access to the internet then you can make use of the following facilities.

Somerset Libraries have free to use tools to help people upskill and look for alternative employment:

Public access computers giving access to; the internet, web-based email, recommended quality recruitment and employment support related internet sites and Microsoft Office applications.

Wi-Fi access for members to use

www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-communities/libraries/library-facilities/wi-fi-in-libraries

Tablet loan service with free internet connection from some of their libraries.

https://glassboxtaunton.co.uk/tablet-loaning-information/

Online digital skills courses, with support

www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-communities/libraries/libraries-services/learning-online

Want to become a Somerset Library member?

To find out more information and sign up to become a library member visit:

www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-communities/libraries/libraries-services/library-membership